



**Marion County**  
**Traffic Safety Partnership**

## Nighttime Seat Belt Enforcement Zone Procedures

Nighttime seat belt enforcement zones address high-risk drivers. Since a large number of serious injury crashes occur at night, we want to address the issue of reducing injuries in crashes by using high-visibility seat belt enforcement, because seat belt use reduces injuries in crashes by up to 50 percent.

Statistics from the Center for the Advancement of Transportation Safety at Purdue University show that:

- In 2002, 52.6 percent of vehicle occupants involved in fatality crashes after dark were unrestrained.
- In 2002, 74.3 percent of vehicle occupant deaths were unrestrained after dark.

**Officer safety** and **public safety** are most important when conducting seat belt enforcement zones during nighttime hours. For this reason we want the zone supervisor to address the areas including safety issues, assignments, sign/ vehicle placement mentioned below, and **that these zones are for seat belt enforcement only**, at each zone roll call. If the zone site is not safe another location should be selected or the officers should go to roving patrols. Seat belt zones should be set up primarily in high-crash and low-belt use areas.

- Zones will only be set up in well-lit areas.
- Zone signs should be placed about 200 feet from the intersection.
- Officers need to wear reflective vests.
- Officers need flashlights with red cones for traffic control.
- A police car will be placed behind the zone sign, with red lights on in the curb lane.
- Violators should only be stopped as they slow down for a yellow/red light or a stop sign.
- The curb lane will be a "dead lane" for vehicle pull off and officer safety. If an off-street pull-off area is available, it should be used.
- If another crime or violation is observed enforcement action is proper.
- Zones are generally three hours long.
- Only vehicles in violation of the seat belt/child restraint laws will be pulled over.
- General traffic should be kept flowing smoothly.
- Consent for the search of a person or vehicle should not be asked unless probable cause for a crime is present.
- If a DUI individual is observed in the zone, a DUI task force car should assist, if available.
- Zones should not be run if the streets are wet or slick.
- Officers will assist motorists that are pulled out of traffic back into the traffic flow.
- A spotting officer by the zone sign should be used to give officers ample warning of a violator approaching. (The officer observing the violation must appear in court.)
- Officers should use the assigned radio channel for communications.

Supervisor statistical sheets need to be faxed into the MCTSP office after each zone.

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